

Iau language

Iau (Iaw, Yau) or **Turu** is a Lakes Plain language of West Papua, Indonesia, spoken by about 600 people. Most speakers are monolingual, and their number is growing. Other peoples in the western Lakes Plain area speak basic Iau. Iau is tonal.

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Names and dialects

Dialects are Foi (Poi), Turu, Edopi (Elopi), and Iau proper; these may be distinct enough to be considered separate languages. Foi is spoken on the large Tariku River (Rouffaer River), Turu on the Van Daalen River, Iau proper between the rivers, and Edopi at the juncture of the Tariku and Kliki (Fou) rivers.

Another name for the language is Urundi ~ Ururi. Dosobou (Dou, Doufou) is specifically Edopi.

In Puncak Jaya Regency, Iau dialects are spoken in Bakusi, Duita, Fawi, and Fi villages, located between the Rouffaer River and Van Daalen River in Fawi District.^[3]

Phonology

The following discussion is based on Bateman (1990a).

Consonants

lau	
<i>Edopi, Turu</i>	
Native to	Indonesia
Region	Western New Guinea
Native speakers	2,100 (2000–2012) ^[1]
Language family	Lakes Plain - Tariku lau
Dialects	Foi Turu Iau Edopi
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	Either: tmu – Iau dbf – Edopi
Glottolog	cent2110 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/cent2110) ^[2]

Consonant phonemes of lau

	<u>Labial</u>	<u>Coronal</u>	<u>Velar</u>
<u>Stop</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>t</u> <u>d</u>	<u>k</u>
<u>Fricative</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>s</u>	

There are six consonants. /t d/ are dental; /s/ is alveolar. /b d/ are implosive, and may be realized as nasals before the low nasal vowel /ã/. /d/ may also be realized as the liquid [l].

/f/ is pronounced [ɸ]~[h] word-initially, or as [x] before the high nonback vowels /i ɨ/. The labial allophone [ɸ] is preferred in the Foi dialect; the glottal allophone [h] is preferred in Turu. It is always pronounced [h] word-medially and as an unreleased plosive [p̚] word-finally. /f/ is the only consonant that can occur word-finally.

Vowels

	<u>Front</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>Back</u>
<u>Fricated</u>	<u>ɨ</u>		
<u>Close</u>	<u>i</u>		<u>u</u>
<u>Near-close</u>	<u>ɪ</u>		<u>ʊ</u>
<u>Open-mid</u>	<u>ɛ</u>		<u>ɔ</u>
<u>Open</u>		<u>ã</u>	

The low vowel is always nasalized, except when it is a component of a diphthong. The open-mid front vowel varies between [e], [ɛ], and [æ].

The following diphthongs exist:

	<u>ɛ</u>	<u>ɪ</u>	<u>ʊ</u>	<u>i</u>	<u>u</u>	<u>ɨ</u>
<u>a</u>	aɛ	aɪ	aʊ	ai	au	aɨ
<u>ɛ</u>				ɛi		
<u>ɔ</u>	ɔɛ			ɔi		
<u>ʊ</u>		ʊɪ				
<u>u</u>				ui		

No diphthongs begin with /ɪ i ɨ/ or end in /a ɔ/.

There are two triphthongs: /aui/ and /aʊɪ/. The back components of these triphthongs are realized as unrounded.

Syllables

Syllables consist minimally of a vowel. They may include a single onset consonant and/or a single coda consonant. Diphthongs and triphthongs are attested. The template is (C)(V)V(V)(C). The tone-bearing unit is the syllable.

Stress

Stress in Iau is predictable: it falls on the final syllable of disyllabic words. (Words may not be longer than two syllables.) The interaction between stress and tone is not clear.

Tone

Iau is the most tonally complex Lakes Plain language. Unlike other Lakes Plain languages which can be disyllabic or trisyllabic, Iau word structure is predominantly monosyllabic. Iau has eight phonemic tones, transcribed by Bateman using numerical Chao tones (usually used with East Asian languages): two level tones (low and high), two rising tones (low rising and high rising), three falling tones (high-low, high-mid, and mid-low), and one falling-rising tone. Phonetically, these are:^[4]

- high (44)
- mid (33)
- high-rising (45)
- low-rising (23)
- high-to-low-falling (42)
- high-to-mid-falling (43)
- mid-to-low-falling (32)
- falling-rising (423)

A sequence of two tones (called a tone cluster) may occur on one syllable. There are eleven tone clusters that can occur on verbs to mark aspect; only three of these can occur on nouns.

Some minimal sets in Iau illustrating phonemic tonal contrasts:^[4]

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| ■ be ^{4 4} 'father-in-law' | ■ te ^{4 4} 'pig wallow' |
| ■ be ³³ 'fire' | ■ te ³³ 'mosquito' |
| ■ be ^{4 5} 'snake' | ■ te ^{4 5} 'man' |
| ■ be ²³ 'path' | ■ te ²³ 'edible tuber' |
| ■ be ^{4 2} 'thorn' | ■ te ^{4 2} 'calf of leg' |
| ■ be ^{4 3} 'flower' | ■ te ^{4 3} 'inlet of body of water' |
| ■ be ³² 'small eel' | ■ te ³² 'flooring' |
| ■ be ^{4 23} 'tree fern' | |

Tone is only lexical on nouns; the lexical forms of verbs are unmarked for tone, and each tone represents a different aspect. The complex system of aspectual marking via tone is discussed in Bateman (1986).

Aspect

Iau also displays complex tonal verb morphology. Verbal roots do not have any inherent tone, but tone is used to mark aspect on verbs. Example paradigms:^[4]

Tone	Aspect	ba 'come'	tai 'moving s.t. toward'	da 'locate s.t. inside'
tone 44	totality of action, punctual	ba ^{4 4} 'came'	tai ^{4 4} 'pulled'	da ^{4 4} 'ate, put it in (stomach)'
tone 33	resultative durative	ba ³³ 'has come'	tai ³³ 'has been pulled off'	da ³³ 'has been loaded onto s.t.'
tone 45	totality of action, incomplete	ba ^{4 5} 'might come'	tai ^{4 5} 'might pull'	
tone 23	resultative punctual	ba ²³ 'came to get'	tai ²³ 'land on s.t.'	da ²³ 'dip into water, wash s.t.'
tone 42	<u>telic</u> punctual	ba ^{4 2} 'came to end'	tai ^{4 2} 'fell to ground'	da ^{4 2} 'eaten it all up'
tone 43	telic, incomplete	ba ^{4 3} 'still coming'	tai ^{4 3} 'still falling'	da ^{4 3} 'still eating it up'
tone 32	totality of action, durative	ba ³² 'be coming'	tai ³² 'be pulling'	
tone 423	telic durative	ba ^{4 23} 'sticking to'	tai ^{4 23} 'be falling'	
			tai ^{4 5} — ³² 'pull on s.t., shake hands'	
			tai ^{4 5} — ³³ 'have pulled s.t., shook hands'	

Mood

Tonal alternations can also serve as final mood and speech act particles.^[4]

- *tone 44*: speaker assumes the information is correct (such as rhetorical questions)
- *tone 32*: speaker asks a question to confirm what he believes is true (such as yes-no questions)
- *tone 43*: speaker is uncertain about the actual state of affairs

Example sentences:^[5]

(1)

a^{4 3} ty^{4 5} bi^{4 5} e^{4 4} a^{4 5} se^{4 4} u²³ di^{4 4} be^{4 4}?
 father people PN SEQ before kill.TOTAL.PUNCT Q.FACT

'So the people from Bie killed father first?'

(2)

fv^{4 5} ba^{4 5} ba³²?
 canoe come.TOTAL.INCOMPL Q.CONFIRM

'Is the plane coming?'

(3)

da^{4 4} a^{4 23} tv^{4 4} be^{4 3?}
2.PL land travel.TOTAL.PUNCT Q.GUESS

‘(I’m guessing) did you (pl) go by land?’

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